



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

NEWS RELEASE

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Adolescent Literacy Plan guides path to improved literacy

MADISON—State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster called the Adolescent Literacy Plan a roadmap to improved literacy among middle and high school students as she accepted the final report during her opening remarks for the 2009 Wisconsin State Reading Association Convention in Milwaukee.

“Demand for high school graduates who can understand increasingly complex and technical materials has never been greater,” Burmaster noted. “This plan will help us ensure all students in Wisconsin can meet those demands.”

The plan recognizes the importance of being able to read and write and defines literacy for the modern world. Twenty-first century literacy includes the ability to manage, synthesize, and analyze multiple streams of information. Literate adolescents need a strong foundation in subject area content. They must draw on that knowledge as they think globally and creatively when identifying and solving problems and recognize the interconnectedness and diversity of the world.

The State Superintendent’s Adolescent Literacy Task Force was co-chaired by Doug Buehl, a retired reading teacher and education consultant from Madison, and Mary Pfeiffer, director of instruction for the Green Bay Area School District. The group evaluated the status of adolescent literacy across the state, finding gaps in high school completion and reading achievement by racial and ethnic groups. They also found declining reading achievement test scores between middle school and high school. Data revealed higher student achievement in schools that have strong library media programs and those that have aligned and integrated information technology literacy standards with content standards and lessons.

Core components of the Adolescent Literacy Plan call for:

Leadership and Collaboration, which includes creating literacy teams and plans for organizing and implementing an effective approach to adolescent literacy.

(more)

Academic Standards, which includes examining Wisconsin Model Academic Standards through the lens of adolescent literacy.

Instruction, Assessment, and Intervention, which includes establishing systems of support and examining their effectiveness.

Professional Learning and Resources, which includes developing professional learning opportunities, Web resources, and initiatives that enhance literacy learning.

Literacy Leaders and Personnel, which includes clarifying roles of specific literacy educators and supporting literacy instruction in teacher education programs.

“The challenges of the 21st century demand nimble, self-regulated, literate citizens who are prepared to compete in the global economy and who have deep knowledge across content areas,” Burmaster said. “This plan sets an ambitious and vital agenda for improving adolescent literacy.”

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NOTES: This news release is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpi2009_19.pdf. The State Superintendent’s Adolescent Literacy Plan is available on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction website at <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/cal/adolescentliteracy.html>.